



CAPITOL NEWS

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Dear Friends,

Happy 2009! As we usher in a new year and a new Legislative session, I want to take a moment to recap what I accomplished this past year and brief you on my plans for this year. With Michigan's unemployment rate hitting 10%, we must do what we can to get everyone back to work and get our economy going again. We have a tough year ahead of us, with a projected state budget deficit reaching \$1 billion. While we will do our best not to cut things like school funding, essential programs or healthcare, we have to leave our options open to find reforms and save money. I do promise, however, that we will not raise your taxes. As always, please contact me anytime if you have questions or concerns about the district, legislation, or you simply want to say hi. I wouldn't be here without you and look forward to working with, and for you, for two more years.

Best Regards,

Unemployment Assistance

As you know, Michigan is at record unemployment levels and unfortunately more people are losing their jobs everyday. Due to the overwhelming number of people trying to file for unemployment in Michigan, the Unemployment Insurance Agency has been unable to handle the high volume of calls. I am committed to helping you file and get assistance in a timely fashion. Please visit my website at www.senatorronjelinek.com to fill out a contact form, or you can call my office at 1-800-305-2121, and we will contact the on your behalf.

New laws sponsored by Sen. Jelinek

STOPPING BOTTLE DEPOSIT FRAUD - Will help prevent Michigan from losing more than \$10 million annually in fraudulent bottle deposit refunds. The new law requires bottle return machines to be retrofitted with new technology and all cans sold in Michigan to be specially marked to prevent out-of-state bottles and cans from being returned in Michigan for the 10-cent deposit. This will stop smuggling rings from bringing truckloads of out-of-state beverages into Michigan and scamming the state – a major problem among the border communities. (Public Act 389 of 2008)

PROTECTING KIDS IN CARS - Gives lawyers and law enforcement officials more authority to arrest, charge and convict someone who leaves a child alone in a car. New tougher legal language was added to close a loophole that was letting too many negligent parents off the hook after endangering their child by leaving them alone in a car for hours. (PA 577 of 2008)

DISSOLVING TOWNSHIP PARK COMMISSION - Allows a township park commission to be dissolved using proper legal procedures. The new law requires putting the question to the voters of a township if 8 percent or more of the voters petition the township board. There previously was no way to disband a commission once created. (PA 496 of 2008)

PERMITTING KIDS TO COMPETE IN OFF-ROAD EVENTS – Allows children under the age of 16 to be eligible to legally participate in organized off-road vehicle riding and racing events. The law waives the requirement that a child under 16 possess a Michigan ORV safety certificate if certain conditions are met as outlined in the legislation (i.e. parental supervision and permission, child possesses out-of-state certificate, proper equipment/clothing is used, etc). (PA 164 of 2008)

REVISING MEDICAID FRAUD PROGRAM – Made changes to the state's Medicaid fraud program to ensure it complies with federal law and to assess penalties to individuals who make false claims. As a result, Michigan is in line for an additional 10 percent cut of any money the Attorney General collects in fraudulent Medicaid claims. (PA 421 of 2008)

PROTECTING PETS AND LIVESTOCK – Authorizes a dog owner or livestock owner to remove, capture or kill a gray wolf that was preying upon the dog or livestock. With the grey wolf population on the rise in Michigan, residents needed the means to protect their livestock and pets from being hurt or killed by wolves. The law also set in place penalties to prevent wolves from being killed unnecessarily. (PA 318 of 2008)

2009 Legislative Plans

During 2009 I will be concentrating my efforts on getting Michigan's economy back on track and helping pull us out of the red. In addition, I plan to introduce legislation to address the following issues, many of which have been brought to my attention by local residents:

- Survey and re-determine the state line between Michigan and Indiana
- Eliminate the requirement to wear a helmet while riding an ATV on private property
- Eliminate the law prohibiting items hanging from rearview mirrors
- Repeal the adultery law
- Provide a tax deduction for certain long term care costs
- Require markings on emergency vehicles to be removed when sold to general public

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